Those glorious visions of our youth!
Oh! does the future e'er atone,
With cold realities of truth,
For those bright fancies, one by one,
It takes from us, till all are gone?
Those glorious visions! Oh! how dull
Each vision of our after years,
Beside those early dreams, appears,
Which made our youth so beautiful!

For *thee*, my flower, the very day
Which bore me from my home away—
The day, which saw me made a bride,
I wandered to Eh-was-see's side
And sought thy friendly boughs to hide
The tears whose stream could not be dried;
And there I found thee, all in bloom,
Loading the still air with perfume.

'Twas noon, and o'er the spot there hung
A stillness, as of death!
The old grey moss all waveless swung
In many a hoary wreath.
No breath of air thy green leaves stirred—
No whisper woke the slumbering bird
In its soft nest beneath;—
The deer half heard my light footfall
And bounded o'er the plain;
But soon unto my wonted call
They hastened back again;
And rearing oft their antlered heads,
They couched them on their leafy beds.

The humble bee ne'er slept so well
As now, within thy rosy bell;
For long he lingered there asleep,
When *I* could only watch and weep,
As vanished, one by one,
Each trace of that beloved spot,
Thy leafy bower—my humble cot,
'Till all at length were gone.
And thus, I left my mountain home,
A wanderer o'er the earth to roam,
Seeking for rest, but finding none!

I gathered thee, all listlessly
At first, but when day after day
Saw me still farther, farther stray
From that loved spot, our native home,
Thou hadst to me so dear become,
That when I reached my journey's end,
I could not bear to fling away
A flower no longer, but a friend.

Years rolled away before I stood
Once more within thy native bower—
Beneath the bough,
Green waving now,
Beside Eh-was-see's crystal flood,
As when I plucked thee thence, my flower!

The startled deer paused not to hear
The voice they once obeyed—
The timid doe—the bounding roe
Sought the deep forest shade—
And long and oft I strove in vain
To woo them back to me again—
They had forgot my wonted call—
They had forgot my light footfall.

The birds were singing in the trees—
The moss was waving in the breeze—
The bee was humming in the bell
Of the wild flowers he loves so well,
And every thing looked gay the while,
And happy in the glad earth's smile.
But *I*, the wand'rer from afar,
To whom this home had been the star,
Which rose upon my lonely way,
And lighted with its gentle ray
The wanderer back again,—
This home, to me, was desolate!
Within its halls another sate,—
And I, the loved and cherished one,
Now stood a stranger at the gate,
Which once had been my own!

KATE.

ANOTHER SCRAP FROM THE LUCKY-BAG.

LAKE DEFENCES AND WESTERN INTERESTS.

January 1, 1845.

Five or six years ago, Mr. Editor, when the Lucky Bag was first brought on deck, my excellent friend,—your predecessor in that chair, and I worked away, with a hearty good will, at the Memphis Dock Yard. Like Burghomasters after a rat in a Dutch Dyke—lest he should flood a province—we pursued it from motives of utility: the subject was discussed and urged and advocated so long and so loudly that at last, we "got it before the people," and 'twas carried.

It was then discovered, all at once, by certain politicians, that "the honor of originating this great National Measure" belonged to some person or other, of whom we had never before heard. When this claim to honor came to be investigated, it was found to rest on the circumstance, that this person had, one day, *mentioned* the subject in conversation. It is a matter of very little consequence, who first *thought* of establishing a National Dock Yard on the Mississippi. So far as I know, I was the first to write, and you to publish on the subject. I thought the measure important; and because I thought so, urged it upon the public. In this, I simply did my duty as an officer and acted the part of a good citizen of the Republic.

As for being the first to *think* of it—: nor Watt nor Fulton was the first to think of steam, but they were the first to *demonstrate the importance* of steam. "Macadam was not the first person who

Digitized by Google

spoke of breaking stones; but Macadam, more strongly than others, felt the importance of breaking stones; he stated it more clearly, persevered in it with tenacity, and wielded his hammer with greater force than other men; and he continued to hammer away until he finally succeeded in bringing his views into general use." That man, Mr. Editor, who first mentions a thing, is not a discoverer; "but he who mentions it so often and so loudly, that he compels mankind to heed him—the man who is so deeply impressed with the importance and correctness of his views, that he will take no denial, but at all risks pushes through difficulties, and is determined, that what he thinks of such vast importance to his country shall not be lost for the want of an advocate—he is a discoverer."

Give the d—l his due, gentle reader. The country has the substance, and I'll not weary you, or waste words in dispute about the shadow.

The Navy owes the Messenger much, but the West owes it more, for its noble stand in support of their interests. Increase, I pray you, those obligations, and help me again to advocate other measures of equal interest to the West, and of like importance to the whole country.

When I first began to discuss the Memphis Dock Yard, I did intend to strengthen my arguments by showing that such an establishment was as essential for Lake, as for Gulf defences. I was dissuaded from urging this view of the case, however, on the grounds that the idea was, at that time, new; and being in advance of public opinion, would, in all probability, weaken the claims of Memphis and the Gulf of Mexico. But four or five years, Mr. Editor, produce great changes in this country, and they have, in this instance, done giant's work.

The public mind has been thoroughly aroused to the defenceless and exposed condition of the South and the West: it is fully impressed with the importance and necessity of providing them with the means of defence. Congress has approved the measures proposed in the Messenger; and, with aunanimity seldom witnessed, passed an act for the establishment of a Naval Dock Yard and Depot at Memphis, and the erection of fortifications on Key West and the Dry Tortugas for the defence of the Gulf. The first war, with a Maritime nation, will show this to be the most important Naval station in the country. Indeed, though the Navy Department has not yet been enabled to put the first spade into the ground at Memphis, so thoroughly are military men already impressed with the importance of a well-found Navy Yard on the Mississippi river, that the Secretary of War, in his last annual Report, makes the defences of the Gulf to hinge upon the Memphis Navy Yard. In his opinion, to construct forts on Key West and the Tortugas for defending the Gulf of Mexico, would only be building strong holds for the enemy, unless the Navy Yard at Memphis be in a condition to succor and to help. Indeed I have this day seen a letter from a very distinguished officer who has been sent to examine Key West and the Tortugas, saying that with these two places fortified and the Memphis yard, we shall be able to lock up the Gulf against the world.

Thus the obvious truth, startling though it be, is at last officially confessed, that the key for locking up that Gulf in safety is to be found in the Mississippi valley among the gallant sons of the West. Military engineers and men of intelligence now see that it turns upon the Naval resources of the Memphis Dock Yard; and they acknowledge it to be in the keeping of that brave and hardy crew of watermen who nightly chaunt their boatman's song to the "Father of waters." Put bars and bolts if you please upon the Florida reefs; but they must be strengthened, made sure and held fast by Naval means and Naval forces from Memphis. The system of warfare is changed. Steam has made ships stronger than they were before, and superior to forts and castles.

Important as it thus appears that the Memphis yard is to a proper system of Gulf defences it is even more important to the Lakes. Without that or some such establishment at the West, to be connected with the Northern Lakes in the manner I am about to propose, the first breeze from the shores of England, in war with us, will crowd in upon the Lakes through her ship canals, swarms of armed cruisers fresh from sea, that will sweep over those waters with fire and sword, and leave wrecked or ruined all our commerce there. This commerce, though but the growth of yesterday is of great value and is rapidly increasing. It already equals, if it do not exceed in value, the whole foreign commerce of the country.* It is but the index of the growth and prosperity of the West, and will soon exceed 200 millions of dollars in yearly value. On the opposite shore and dividing with us the waters which give wings and value to this commerce, we have a strong rival and cautious neighbor in peace, an active, brave and powerful enemy in war;—a nation, that in the most quiet and prosperous times, never leaves exposed a weak point of her own, nor suffers to escape her the unguarded points of friend or foe.

While I turn to examine how this nation, for the last 10 or 15 years, has been continually strengthening herself on the Lakes, let me ask the Lake States, aye all the States, but especially the Lake States—what, in case of war with England, are our means of Lake defence? What protection can they give to this vast commerce of their own?

As soon as Great Britain began to recover from the exhausting effects of her last war with us and the Continent, she recollected what had occurred on the Lakes, and with deep but smothered feelings of national chagrin, began to cast about how she might for the future best strengthen herself in that quarter.

*It is officially stated for 1844 at $100,000,000.

Digitized by Google

The treaty of Ghent stipulated that neither of the contracting parties should keep afloat on the Lakes any armed forces beyond a mere gun-boat or two. How then could she make ready against the next war! To build a Lake Navy and leave it on the stocks to rot would be bad economy. Besides, it would be attracting too much attention and would put us, too, on our guard. She therefore quietly went to work, and under the pretence of carrying out a system of internal improvements merely for the accommodation of Canadian commerce, set about connecting the Lakes with the Ocean by means of large *Ship* Canals—the largest on the Continent. Through these canals she can now, in case of war, cover the Lakes with all the light forces of the British Navy. For the last 10 or 15 years that nation has been constantly engaged on these works. She first constructed the Welland and the St. Lawrence Canals; with these two links on the military chain thus drawn, she at first thought to make sure her future supremacy on the Lakes. But she saw the importance and power and strength of the West growing and extending and enlarging themselves by broad spreading, more and more every day. She therefore judged it wise to tear down her first works, to commence new and to build larger. The Rideau Canal was forthwith commenced, and no less than 6000 laborers set at work in deepening and widening the Welland Canal. This canal, though not yet completed upon its enlarged scale, is navigable in the summer. They are now at work on it, and expect to complete it next year. It has a lock at either end 185 feet long and 45 feet broad, and, though unfinished, it is already capable of passing vessels of 450 tons burthen, (larger, be it recollected, than Perry's flag-ship of Lake Erie,) from the Ocean around the falls of the Niagara, and up to that very Lake, and thence through Huron to Michigan or Superior.

The Rideau Canal is an important military work, for the completion of which neither cost, nor expense, nor labor was calculated. Leaving the St. Lawrence at Montreal Island, (the natural head of Ship Navigation,) vessels first ascend the Ottawa river as high as the Chaudiére Falls. Here they enter for Kingston the Rideau Canal which is 135 miles long and of unlimited breadth. It has no tow path, was constructed without excavations, and "navigation is performed on it," says Darby the Geographer, "by steamboats or barges towed by steamers, as on the North River."

This canal is formed by connecting a chain of Lakes by means of locks and dams alone, which, with the refluent water, have converted hundreds of thousands of acres of land into standing pools. "A single dam, (and there are 20 in the chain,) not more than 24 feet high and 180 broad," says Mr. Taggart, the engineer, "throws the rapids and rivers above it, in a still sheet of water, for a distance of more than 20 miles, backing the water up rivers, ravines and valleys, and converting large tracts of land into Lakes."

A dam not *more* than 24 feet high and 180 feet broad! What magnificent artificial navigation!" "The Rideau Canal," adds this very intelligent engineer, whom I delight to quote, for he speaks as one having authority, "was made by the British Government at the expense of about two millions and a half of dollars," (not counting the value of the drowned lands.)

"One *important* object," continues the same high authority, "one IMPORTANT object which the British Government had in view in making so large an outlay, was to *complete* an inland communication of the *greatest importance in time of war.* The British can now send their ships and steamers from the sea by means of the Rideau and Welland Canals to Lake Michigan. I have seen vessels on the St. Lawrence loaded with the produce of Illinois and Michigan, on their way to Montreal and Quebec, and if necessary, they might proceed to England." And I have since heard, Mr. Editor, of vessels being spoken out upon the high seas, bound from Chicago in Illinois across the blue water, to "Cowes and a market."

But this is not the only cordon of military strength about the Lakes, which this far seeing nation has silently and almost unnoticed been drawing around us. When her fleets get upon the Lakes in war, it would be exceedingly inconvenient if not hazardous for her to send her crippled ships to Montreal and Quebec for repairs, or even from Lake to Lake. Therefore she has established two Naval stations on Lake Huron, one at Penetangushene, the other hard by, at Lake Simcoe. At these, she is now actually engaged, as I learn through gentlemen from that section of the country, in building ships of war. These stations are chosen with great judgement on her part, for in the present state of our Lake defences, they command the straits of Mackinac and can forbid us to enter from Huron, either Erie or Superior. Nor is this all: they overlook the defenceless shores of seven States embracing a border line of near 2000 miles. Now what, let me ask those seven States—and three of them are the largest in the Union—what have they, in case of war, to rely upon for their defence or the safety of their Lake towns and commerce? Have they a Navy Yard there—magazines crowded with stores and implements of war ready at hand? any grand "inland communication of the *greatest importance in time of war,*" by which, when sorely pressed, they can be succored from the building Docks of Memphis, or from the Naval forces in the Gulf, or on the Atlantic. No, the Lakes are locked up, and help cannot come from these quarters. The Navy, upon which they have to rely, is standing among the tall trees of the forest. Of these they may build ships, if the enemy,

Digitized by Google

already complete mistress of the Lakes, would allow them to be launched.

Our Lake defences consist at present, of the Iron-sided Steamer Michigan, with two guns on board, and four on shore. But what is she among 40 such, which the Welland canal could bring there in a day?

We have a fort or two on the Lakes, it is true; but according to the Secretary of War, backed of course by his corps of Scientific Engineers, forts and castles would be of no avail in defending the Gulf of Mexico, unless they have the Navy to support them. What therefore, without ships to succor are forts and castles on the Lakes, but strong holds, within our very midst, for the enemy? The opinion is fast gaining ground among Military men, that forts cannot withstand the broad-sides of ships. At Copenhagen, Nelson set forts and castles at defiance with his fleet, and silenced them all with their tremendous broadsides; and up to that time Copenhagen was thought to be impregnable. Not to go far back, nor multiply cases, the French fleet overpowered the impregnable fortress, so considered also, of San Juan de Ulloa; and still later, English oak proved too strong for the stones and mortar of Jean D'Acre.

But, not to argue the question, as to the superiority of ships or castles, (though whenever ships have ventured to attack them, the ships have generally borne off the palm,) we will allow those few Lake forts their utmost reach, and admit that they can do what trained Engineers of the Army now tell us, the strongest forts that can be built on the Tortugas cannot do, i. e. defend themselves against the attacks of a fleet. Admitting therefore, that they can withstand the broad-side of ships and hold out against a fleet, they can only defend a *point* at most. But the Lakes consist of lines; it is lines therefore, and not *points* that are to be defended there. And if the Lake borders are to be defended with forts, it would be cheaper in the end to build a double-banked Chinese Wall at once, from St. Regis in the East, to the Grand Portage in the West. But even then, without the Navy, they would be but half defended, for their commerce in war would be entirely at the mercy of the enemy.

It is an important matter, this question of Lake defences, and should be considered free from sectional prejudices, or party aims, or political bias. It is a question with which party and politics have nothing to do.

Our Lake commerce already equals, and in a year or two more, is likely to exceed in value the whole foreign commerce of all the States put together. For the safety, security and defence of the latter millions upon millions have already been expended. For the former, not as much, all told, since the war, as is annually voted for the seaboard, under the head of the Army and Navy bills. There is this difference too, between the Lake and foreign commerce: Most of the latter is on foreign account, and much of it is carried on in foreign bottoms. All of the former is on our own account, carried on in American bottoms by and among American citizens, and between the States of the Union. If therefore, we should be prepared to defend and protect either in time of war, surely the claims of this, for defence, are stronger and more eloquent than argument can make them. If we can give 10 or 12 millions every year on account of coast defences, and the protection of our foreign commerce, surely one moiety of this sum might once in 30 years, be allowed the West for its defences.

In the last war, Great Britain had no ship canal from the Lakes to the ocean:—no naval station as she now has, overlooking Ohio, and Michigan and and Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin on the upper Lakes, and commanding the embouchures of Huron, Michigan and Superior. She was as defenceless then as we were, and still are, though even then, she attempted to invade us from that quarter: But we were strong enough then; for we could meet her on equal terms and could capture her fleets as fast as she could build, launch and equip them. Suppose though the Welland and Rideau Canals had then been opened, by which she could have sent her fleets direct from the Docks of Portsmouth and Chatham to Lake Erie. Those waters would have literally swarmed with English cruisers, and instead of the proud announcement from the St. Lawrence, "we have met the enemy and they are ours," we should have heard of one equally laconic perhaps, but in a more lordly strain, from the other side, "Be pleased to acquaint their Lordships, that I have burnt, sunk and destroyed as per margin."

So long therefore, as Great Britain remained unstrengthened on the Lakes, we were as strong as need be, and cared not to be stronger: But she has since strengthened herself there mightily; and it behooves us to strengthen ourselves just as much, or not at all. We keep standing armies, provide ourselves with the means of defence, and keep at hand the implements of war, because other nations are armed to the teeth and are war-like. It is they, therefore, who impose upon us the necessity and expense of Military preparation. If all other nations would sink their Navies, raze their forts, and disband their armies, we too might do the same, for we arm only for defence, not for conquest. But this they will not do, and we are liable to attack from them: it is therefore our policy to guard our weak points, and to strengthen ourselves in proportion to the power of others to annoy. The same policy which dictates a system of coast defences, the same reason which compelled us to build on the Lakes a Navy in the last war, the same wisdom that placed upon us the injunction, "In peace prepare for war," now urges us to make our means of defence there,

Digitized by Google

equal to the liabilities of attack. It is a case too plain for argument; common sense every where and at once admits, that it is as much the duty of the General Government to defend one border, as another—for it is not the strong points of the citadel that gives security to the weak, it is the weak point that makes towers and castles, garrison and citadel insecure. The Lake border is as much exposed and more defenceless than the Atlantic coast: Millions upon millions have been expended for the security of that, millions are yet due for the safety of the Gulf States, and we claim for the defences of the Lake States as much as is meet. One part of the edifice must be defended as well as another. When you make the doors fast you must look to the windows also. The Lakes can never be defended against the forces which Great Britain can now throw in upon them, without the means on our part of sending there also something from the sea to match them. The question therefore, presents itself as to the channel by which we can best send a Naval force from the sea to the Lakes: This question I proceed to consider.

The first means of communication that presents itself is by the great Erie Canal of New York. But this canal is 364 miles long; it has 84 locks, and an elevation of near 700 feet to overcome. It is but 4 feet deep, and can pass vessels not more than 15 feet wide. Therefore, before it could answer for the purpose now in view, it would have to be greatly enlarged. The expense of doing this, and the circumstances that it is State property in successful operation, answering all the purposes for which it was intended, and is besides, yielding a large Revenue to its proprietors, are so many practical difficulties in the way, each one of itself sufficient to forbid any attempt on the part of the General Government to convert that into a steamboat or ship canal, suitable for Naval and Military purposes. The money required for such an undertaking would sink a Navy.

Objections equally strong apply to the Wabash and Erie Canal, as well as to all other Lake canals from the Ohio river. If the distance were not too great, the precarious navigation of that river, would make it inexpedient to adopt for a Military highway to the Lakes any of the routes leading through it.

The only practicable rout left for us to consider is that which leads through the Illinois river to Lake Michigan. The distance from the head of river navigation to the Lakes is but 100 miles. There is a ship canal already commenced and nearly completed, but going to ruin for the want of means to finish it.

The Illinois Canal is for sale. When completed on the scale of the Welland and Rideau Canals, it would give us the same supremacy and advantage on the Western Lakes that Great Britain now has in the Eastern. She can approach them from the sea, and we cannot; with the Illinois Canal equal to hers, we could approach the Western Lakes from the sea, and she cannot. We could therefore meet her at least half-way, and dispute Lake ascendancy with her, with many natural advantages in our favor. The lat. of the Rideau Canal is 45½°; the extreme Northern point of the Illinois, is but 42°; more than 200 miles difference of lat. in our favor. We could therefore, in case of war, commence the assemblage of a fleet on the Lakes at least a month, or six weeks earlier in the spring, or later in the fall than she could; which natural advantage would be sufficient of itself to turn the scale in our favor.

The completion of this work upon a scale commensurate with the objects in view, (the connecting the Gulf and the Lakes by steam-boat navigation,) is an important link in the system of general defence. It is a great National work upon which in war, the integrity of our soil in seven States entirely depends, and one upon which the great Western Valley itself must mainly rely for safety and defence. I therefore, run up the Lake flag and go for fortifying them with "motes and ditches," instead of parapet and wall.

I have not the leisure at this time, nor the ability at any time, to do justice to this subject. But that I may not excite the prejudice of any one so as to prevent him from giving it a candid hearing and a fair consideration, I will here state that I have no special interest whatever in the measures I am about to advocate; that I do not own any Illinois or other State stock, nor do I know any one who does, or who is in any manner whatever interested, except so far as every American citizen is interested in the payment of the obligations of that State. "Honest Illinois;" of all the unfortunate States, she has made the greatest efforts to meet her obligations, and I have witnessed her noble endeavors with feelings of pride.

The means of defence now proposed are, as far as I know, practically new. The plan, besides being the best and cheapest and the most efficient that can be adopted, is in itself good. The collateral advantages to flow from it are great in their bearing and not a few in number. One of them is in the ability which it will impart to that State to meet her obligations. I should rejoice as much as any one, except the Rev. Sidney Smith, or some other English bond-holder to see not only that, but all the States in a condition to meet honest liabilities. Yet, in a National point of view, the question of State solvency or insolvency has nothing to do with the merits of the case. These relate entirely to the general defence, and in this view only do I propose to consider the matter.

The fortifications at Key West and the Tortugas and the Dock-Yard at Memphis, make but a part of the system of Western defences about to be commenced. They are bolts only to the front door;

Digitized by Google

the back door, by the Lakes, is still unbarred and wide open. So long as that is the case, there is no security within. That great Mississippi valley and Lake country, when properly provided with the means of defence, will become our Citadel of strength, as it already is the seat of our national wealth, the fountain-head of our commercial prosperity; it cannot be defended except from the sea. I urge the fact upon the country, that unless in a war with Great Britain we can assemble as strong a Naval force on the Lakes and get it there as soon as she can, we cannot defend them. Suppose that England should declare War with us to-morrow: in two weeks time, she could have, of her sixty War Steamers, thirty or forty on the Lakes. In that time not one could we add to the only one which we have there;—we could not build them in so short a time. To do that would require months, and there is no channel by which we could send there any disposable Naval force which we might have on the Mississippi, in the Gulf, or along the seaboard. With such a start of us, what would become of our Lake commerce? It would be struck lifeless in a day. The Lakes are narrow, and these Steamers, in a line a' breast, stretching across from shore to shore might, with brooms at their mast head, literally sweep the Lakes from "Sackett's Harbor" to "Fond du Lac." There would be nothing to prevent. In one month's time all our trading vessels there, might, for aught the government could do, be either sunk or burned or held as English prizes.

What too in the case supposed, would become of the Oswego and the great Erie Canals of New York! Such a force, we all must admit, could take possession of their mouths, and if necessary, blow up a lock or two, and thus cut short, at least for a time, the revenues of the great State of New York herself. In this case, taxation upon her people must come in order to sustain State credit. And if we may judge from the late anti-rent movements on the North River, taxation would not be more palatable to the people of that great State, than it has proved to those of some of her unfortunate sisters. But taxation in the aggregate, and by the wholesale, would be nothing in comparison of individual losses, the universal distress and public calamities which the destruction of our Lake commerce would bring with it.

The same remarks, continuing the hypothesis, apply to Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana; for the ties which bind them all to the Lakes are as close as the umbilical cord. Every State has a general interest in Lake defences, but each of these States has a particular and an especial interest besides—therefore I address myself particularly to them. It becomes them and their people, their statesmen and presses to make the first move in so important a matter as the question of Lake defences has now become. There is no want of patriotism or of national spirit in the land—and if these States in particular will take up the subject, their defences are sure.

With the Illinois Canal for passing steamers, and the Navy-Yard at Memphis in the condition which the resources, the welfare and interests of the Mississippi Valley require it to be, we could, at the first notes of war, pour the whole Naval strength of the Mississippi Valley right into the Lakes. In three or four days the entire Steam-Navy of the West could be assembled there, and then having the first blow, we could follow it up with deadly effect. The command of the Lakes would be ours; we could shut up the Welland and Rideau Canals, and choose where to land in Canada, and fix upon our own time and point of attack. Thus fortified, our lake commerce might be as active and as safe, and the revenue of the Lake Canals as great and as secure in war as in peace.

In the last war we built two fleets on the Lakes and captured two more from the enemy. Now, had this canal been opened, those fleets might have been at New Orleans to assist the gun-boats there, or they might have been out upon the sea, there again to "meet the enemy and make them ours." At the least, when the war was over, the Lake Navy might have been drawn off through it to the sea, and thus saved the country millions of dollars, which it immediately after the war proceeded to expend in building just such a fleet for the Atlantic. The Lake Navy was of no use when the war was done; it was left there in "cold obstruction" and finally sold for what it would bring. Could it have been got to the sea, the increased value of it, when there, would have been quite sufficient to complete this canal. Without this canal, the public loss, the suffering and national inconvenience to be undergone by the country in the next war then, if it could be told in dollars, would be sufficient to drain the Lakes, and to turn Superior and Erie into the Mississippi river.

"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just:—" a few thousand seamen armed with right and fighting for their homesteads on the Lakes, would be stronger and more valiant than all the "pressed" men that England could send against them. It is wise; it is republican; and there is strength in the very idea, that in providing for the general defence, the system should be so arranged, that each citizen should have the defending of his own fire-side. The Marblehead sailor, in the day of battle, always true and brave, surely would fight with a stouter heart and stronger arm off Cape Cod, and in sight of his little white cottage, than it would be in the nature of man to do far away and when home was not in danger, as off the Balize for instance. Here the strongest man of the East would be a Samson still, but he would be only Samson in a wig. The waterman of the West, on the other hand, would feel that he too was shorn of half his strength,

Digitized by Google

if he were sent to fight off Sandy Hook when New Orleans was attacked. The wild beast in its den, and for its young, and man at his home fighting in defence of his own, are the most terrible in battle.

In providing for the general defence, be considerate; take advantage of this principle, and be strong in the hearts of the people. Establish your defences and conduct your wars, as far as practicable, upon these principles. When the poor man falls in battle, let it be, if possible, near home and its endearments—do not send him from the West to the East, while you send another from the South to take his place. But rather leave each one to defend his own fireside and then no enemy can withstand him. Let the Nantucket man fight for his whalebone and oil, the Western man for his loamy bottoms and cotton bags, and then let the strong help the weak wherever they appear. This is the great source of strength in the Memphis Dock-Yard, for it places the Gulf defences in the hands of the Gulf people.

This feature is another of those natural advantages to be derived from the proposed measures of defence. The plan of consigning the defences of the Lake to the people of the Lakes, cannot be seen in all its beauty and force except in war, then it will make victory more certain, and adorn our arms with new triumphs,—it will make your warriors in battle more than men, their enemies less. In the last war, Jack Tar fought the battles of the Lakes. He fought bravely and won nobly. But think you, Mr. Editor, the exposures of Lake life, the ravages of the "Lake fever" would have made such havoc in our fleet there, had there then been a body of Lake sailors inured to the climate of the Lakes, and familiar with their waters, ready to man it? The cost of victory would not have been half as great.

The commerce of the Lakes now affords a noble body of sailors, quite equal to their own protection in war, if Government will but provide them with the means. Let, therefore, this Ship Canal be opened;—send, now and then through it, a man-of-war steamer, built in the West, armed in the West and manned from the West. Employ it on Lake service. Give occupation to the Navy there by assigning to it the Survey* of the Lakes. Accustom the Lake people to the Navy, by employing in it, as you may have occasion, their kinsmen and friends in preference to the seamen of other waters. Teach them now to look upon the Navy for their defence in war, and then, when war comes, the moral force of your Lake fleet, manned by Lake people, fighting for Lake interests and their own safety, will, of itself, prove a tower of strength that will make us truly invincible. Who can estimate the degree of strength, the increase of military power and resources which such a system of defence would give this country in war? There is a moral grandeur in the very idea: the measure is due both to the Lake country and the West.

Twenty millions of dollars have been expended in expelling the Indians from Florida. With his own strong arm and trusty rifle, the Western man has chased away the savage from his lurking place, the wild beast from his haunts; he has reclaimed a wilderness, imparted value to the soil; without cost he has already added millions upon millions to the national wealth, and is every day increasing the store by princely additions. So long as he could meet his enemy on equal terms, he craved no protection, wanted no means of defence except a free use of the arms which nature and art had given him. On the open plain, or behind the bush—he cared not which—all he wanted was his trusty rifle and a fair chance.

But times have changed, "*et nos mutamur cum illis.*" The "pale faces" and not the red-man are the enemy whose movements he has to watch; their weapons are not the same, and their system of warfare is different. Instead of the bark canoe, dusky leviathans of war will skim over the Lakes armed for the contest with artillery as terrible as the bolts of heaven. His puny rifle and leaden bullet cannot match their hollow shot and Paixhan guns. What the West now claims from the Federal arm is the means of meeting her neighbour on the North, *always* on equal terms.

We build forts and castles on the sea-board at an enormous expense—we then preserve them from decay and keep them in repair at perpetual and heavy charges upon the States. Since the war not less than 300 millions of dollars have been voted by Congress for the defences of the Atlantic sea-board and the protection of its commerce. And how much, pray, for the Lakes? Not the one hundredth part, if the thousandth part of what the Lake country and the Lake people have paid directly out of their own pockets and from their own resources into the public fund. It is their industry that makes the West give to the other States of her surplus produce the yearly sum of four or five hundred millions of dollars; it is their enterprise that gives value to the public lands: But where are the national defences for them? We did, indeed, at much expense and with great labor, proceed to erect a strong fortification at Rouse's Point with a view to Lake defen-

* Two or three years ago Congress authorized a *Hydrographic* Survey of the Lakes—a survey for the purposes of Navigation—and which therefore properly belonged to the Navy. But instead of allowing it to take this course, it was made a job of and by a curious arrangement got into the hands of the Army. Though the Navy has a vessel on the Lakes already officered and manned, and doing nothing, we see the Army building another vessel right along side of her to carry on this survey. This system of jobbing and getting up independent Navies is getting to be a very serious matter, which ought to be looked into. We have our Army Navies, our Coast Survey Navies—our Treasury Navy, and a Navy Navy, all and each independent of the other. They should all be merged into one, and those sources of abuse, waste, extravagance and corruption to which they give rise, stopt up. Will not some of our correspondents take this subject up? *Suum cuique.*—[*Ed. Mess.*

Digitized by Google

ces. It was intended to command the entrance from Canada into Lake Champlain and does command. But after we had built this magnificent fortress it was discovered that we had built it on the English side, and we had to give it up. Still there are parts of the country where great attention is paid to national defences and the protection of commerce. We run walls out into the sea; we deepen channels and cut away bars where the water is *salt;* nay, we actually raise up, from the depths of the ocean, islands on which we may build forts and castles, to overlook the "yesty waves" and frown upon the angry sea in coast defence. Shall we then be told by any pseudo interpreter of that clause of the Constitution which requires the Federal Government to provide for the *general defence*, that we may fortify by building up islands but not by digging canals—that the Constitution contemplated military roads, but never a military canal?

Mutual defence was the great object for which the States met in convention; the grand aim of confederation. And because the canal proposed has been half completed;—because a noble young State, in the true spirit of Western patriotism, had the sagacity to perceive the vast national importance of this work and the energy to project it;—because she undertook it single handed, and was swamped—she and her resources—by the magnificence of the enterprise, shall we now be told that it would be interfering with State rights or assuming State debts, to procure from that State the right to complete this most important link in the general system of defence? It is the duty, not the privilege, but the *bounden* duty of Congress to provide for the defences of the Lakes. What other means is half so wise, cheap, effective, or beneficial as this? There is no other channel or means which, either for strength, efficiency, cost or economy is comparable to it. Opening into a magnificent sheet of water, entirely within our own borders, Lake Michigan is a complete sack, ample enough to contain all the ships of all the navies in the world. Here, in war, should it be required, we could assemble from the sea, the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi river and its tributaries all the forces, the means and implements of war which the boundless resources of that magnificent valley afford. In the very heart of this country, midway between the regions of the Gulf and the Lakes, is to stand the important Dock-Yard of Tennessee; from its ample work-shops and magazines of war-like stores, each river boat, as it passes Northward in war, may be equipped with hollow shot and shells, mounted with the most terrible engines of destruction, and hastened on to repel invasion; or they may procure commissions to roam the Lakes, burn, sink and destroy. In one month's time or less, it would be in the power of the General Government to concentrate on Lake Michigan such an assemblage of steam men-of-war from the Valley of the West, as the world never saw. From this place of rendezvous, entering the great Lake chain, midway between Erie and Superior, they would be convenient and ready for any point of attack. In the last war the contest on the Lakes was a contest of ship-building. The enemy began to build and launch, and we did the same; the fortune of war was on our side, and we captured two of his fleets. Defeated, but not conquered, he began to build ships of the line. We did the same. When peace came it found an English ship of 100 guns actually afloat on the Lakes, and two American line of battle-ships of equal size on the stocks. And on the stocks they still remain. Having her ship-canals, England may now lay down the keels of her Lake Navy at Portsmouth, and therefore *out-build* us.

The Lakes and the Gulf are the two great ventricles of the Western country; they are the seat of strength in war; and in peace, of health and energy, of commercial prosperity and national wealth. Through them all the elements of our national greatness are first put into the channels of circulation. The Mississippi river and its tributaries are the veins and arteries through which it is kept up. But to give full life to the system, to quicken the energies, and to make its commercial and Naval importance equal to its agricultural and military resources, this connection is needed. That the military strength of this region may equal its physical capacities, we have but to increase its powers of circulation. Complete this canal and every source of public weal throughout that vast region will be wonderfully augmented.

I am no internal improvement man, Mr. Editor. But can such a work be opposed with reason upon any constitutional ground? From Maine to Georgia, on the sea-board, we build fortifications and surround them with canals, called *motes* and *ditches*. It is done for the security of those within and for the protection of the castles themselves. And pray, sir, what is the great valley of the West but an immense castle of strength to this country,—the very citadel itself of the nation: For its security and the safety of the garrison within, numbering millions of freemen, this Illinois "ditch" is needed and *must be made*.

To complete the coast defences of the Atlantic upon their present plan, will require an outlay of 50 millions of dollars. This sum the Engineers of the army tell us is necessary to defend certain *points*, and then there must be a Navy,—our right arm, and great bulwark of strength,—to guard the *lines* and to help to defend the *points*. The cost of two of the dozen line-of-battle-ships which are rotting at their moorings, or grounding on their beef-bones before our Atlantic cities, would complete this canal. Nay, the harbor defences of one Atlantic city, smaller than many "villages" on the Lakes, would complete the whole system of Lake defences, and

Digitized by Google

make that border forever safe from invasion. Defences for the Borough of Norfolk have been built up, or are in process of completion, at a cost of five millions of dollars.

Fortress Monroe and Castle Calhoun are works which must be garrisoned and kept in order continually at a heavy yearly expense. The money that has been expended upon them lies idle in peace, and its value is felt only in war. And after all, these splendid forts defend but a point: an enemy may still land in Lynnhaven Bay, and for ought their guns can do, march up to Norfolk. The first cost of such works is necessarily great, but it is nothing when compared to the continual demand for repairs, kept up year after year upon the treasury forever; garrisons of armed soldiers to protect them must also be clothed, fed and maintained at the public expense. How different with the work proposed. It with one or two out-works will protect 2000 miles of coast line in war, and in peace be a source of untold blessings to the East and the West, the North and the South, of solid and substantial benefit and advantages to a vast commerce. It will give the Western farmer the choice of markets at New Orleans, New York or Canada. It will garrison itself and keep itself in repair. It will more than maintain itself. The money expended upon it, in peace or in war, is never idle for a moment, and the work will pay back first cost every year in untold and princely sums, its dividends of public weal becoming greater and greater, the longer it lasts, the stronger we grow. Let this work be completed, and it will be a dragon's tooth planted in the West to bring forth for the defence of the country, a harvest of steam-clad warriors, ever brave, always ready.

The national road is a military highway. But considering the State improvements which may be used in its stead, its importance compared with the Illinois Canal, as a fortification, as a means of defence, is as a long-boat to a ship of the line. In default of this, State improvements afford no other channels, no by-ways through which the Navy may pass to the Lakes in war. The same arrangement that has been made with the States with regard to the national road, might, I humbly submit, be made with Illinois with regard to this canal. Let the General Government complete the work upon the requisite scale, and I apprehend that that State would guaranty to keep it in order without charge forever, subject always to the control of the Federal Government in war, provided she might enjoy its advantages and the benefits flowing from it in peace. Thus may we be doubly armed. This means of defence—this fortification—for so it may be called, makes us greater in peace, stronger and more powerful in war than all the forts and castles that could be strung together.

With this canal complete, the straits of Mackinaw become to the Lakes what the straits of Florida are to the Gulf: these and not the Balize make the mouth of the Mississippi; so its head waters would flow through Mackinaw, and not from Itasca.

The same reasoning and arguments which have induced the establishment of a Navy-Yard on the Gulf, apply to a like measure of precaution and defence near these straits. This would be the grand *point d' appui* for our Lake forces. Here our crippled and distressed ships could hasten from the other Lakes for relief and repairs. The military importance of such an establishment at such a point is obvious. It needs only to be mentioned and it is clear to every one. The necessity and use of a magazine on board a man-of-war, are not more apparent.

With this therefore, and a depot of coal and of implements of war at Chicago, with which our vessels could be supplied as they enter the Lakes, the means of defence in that quarter would be ample, and such as no power on earth could prevail against. Here the larger vessels would receive their armament as they enter the Lakes, and here they would leave it as they return.

There should also be on Lake Erie a Depot of coal, and a place of refuge and repair for crippled or over-powered ships.

I have thus, Mr. Editor, in great haste, and in the midst of a great press of other business, hastily thrown together these ideas. In a crude shape they are, and somewhat awkwardly put forth, I admit. But the subject is not to rest here; I intend to persue it when more at leisure. In the meantime do you and the West go ahead and keep it before the country.

Yours as of yore,

HARRY BLUFF, U. S. N.

GERTRUDE.

This place was reserved till the last moment, in the hope of gratifying the impatience of our readers with the continuation of Gertrude. But from unavoidable circumstances, Gertrude has not yet made her appearance. A fair and acceptable substitute, however, will be found in the following *critique* upon Mr. Longfellow's poems. It was thought that so chaste and discriminating a review of that popular author would be preferred even to one of the excellent Tales, which will be duly served up. The lovers of Tales will find in "The Vision of Wagner," something far above the reach of ordinary Magazine "stories."

Digitized by Google